

**Minutes**  
Safe Schools Committee Meeting  
December 4, 2014  
Arkansas Department of Education  
#4 Capitol Mall, Room 303-B

Dr. Cheryl May (Chair) called the meeting of the Safe Schools Committee (SSC) to order at 12:05. The following members were present: Deborah Coffman, Jeff Collum, Phyllis Curtis, Pam Fitzgiven, Randy Goodnight, Jamie Hammond, Bubba Jones, and Scott Spainhour.

Also present were Ms. Kimberly Friedman, Arkansas Department of Education Director of Communications, and Ms. Michelle Griffin,, Arkansas Department of Education Director of Legislative Services.

Ms. Coffman introduced new attendees. Dr. May gave a brief introductory statement about the committee's purpose and what it hopes to accomplish.

Dr. May asked for discussion of the committee's comments on the existing legislation report. A summary follows.

**A.C.A. §6-17-411 (Criminal Records Checks):**

- There is no standard definition for a "school volunteer." The SSC might develop one.
- Digital learning programs may create opportunities for inappropriate relationships.
- Background checks may be necessary, but the expense may discourage parents from volunteering.
- Some schools use the Raptor background check system for immediate checks on visitors to campus. This system works primarily for identifying registered sex offenders but can be expanded to perform quick criminal background checks.
- There is no consistency among school districts as to what background checks are done on volunteers.
- Districts may need to pay for background checks for low-income families who are seeking jobs with the district.

**NSTA Lab Rules and Regulations:**

- Should the committee develop recommendations as to the consequences of violating the rules?
- Because the rules were developed by a national organization, the SSC has no authority to alter them.

**A.C.A. §6-15-1302 (Emergency Plans for Terrorist Attacks):**

- Unless funds are appropriated to support initiatives under this act, the state cannot require schools to implement emergency plans. The law requires schools to develop emergency plans, but there is no provision for enforcement or follow up.
- The statement of assurance that superintendents are required to sign each year reports on the completion of required emergency drills.
- The state should establish standards for active shooter training.
- The original Senate bill placed the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) in charge of active shooter training.
- Funding for school resource officers (SRO) and security programs is an issue.
- The state should establish a recommended ratio of SROs to students.
- The SSC should develop recommendations on furthering the safe schools initiative.

**ESEA, Section 4141 (Gun Possession Rules):**

- There are some issues with how to report students who have a gun on campus.
- There was discussion last meeting about whether the SSC should take a position on arming teachers, but no consensus was reached.
- There are many issues connected with arming teachers: initial training, purchase of weapons and ammunition, and storage of weapons.

- There is currently a moratorium on arming teachers through at least the next legislative session. It should be up to the district. Superintendents would have to decide which teachers to train and arm. The SSC could create guidelines for districts. A better solution might be placing SROs in every school.
- The SSC could issue a recommendation for or against arming teachers and should make a recommendation for standards.
- There is confusion of exactly what the concealed carry law and the gun free zone law say about having a gun on a school campus.

A.C.A. §6-17-102 (Emergency First Aid Personnel):

- One person per campus does not seem to be enough. The law establishes the minimum; districts can go beyond the minimum.
- Districts could have emergency response teams who are required to meet certain training standards.
- Training could be offered through the education cooperatives.
- The first step should be to develop standardized training that would serve as a model for schools.

6-19-101 thru 128 (Transportation):

- Cars passing stopped school busses continue to be a problem.
- Putting cameras on buses might help to identify cars that pass busses. However, this could only identify the car, not the individual driving it at the time.
- State law prohibits using a cell phone while driving on school property. Schools could share their best practices for preventing texting while driving on campus.

ADE Rules on AEDs: The SSC may recommend consolidation of the rules.

The SSC also discussed professional development for educators. The following points were brought up.

- Teachers must complete 60 hours of professional development per year.
- Some subjects are mandated and are offered on a four-year rotational basis.
- Bullying is not one of the required subjects.
- Meeting all statutory professional development requirements already make it difficult to conduct emergency response training. There is little time left for safety training.

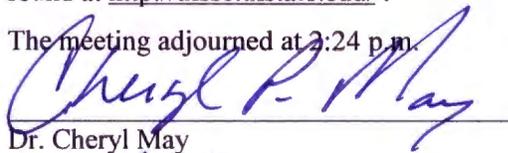
It was recommended that the following persons be added as members of the SSC:

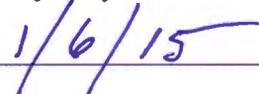
- Ms. Otistene Smith (ADE Federal Programs)
- Linda Spear-Graham, who has school crisis expertise
- A representative from the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
- A representative from the Mayflower School District
- A representative from the medical community
- Mickey Seiler, from Conway, who has expertise in emergency response exercises

Mr. Collum moved that those individual be added to the committee. Ms. Fitzgiven seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting was set for January 6, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Criminal Justice Institute, located at 26 Corporate Hill Drive in Little Rock. Discussion will focus on developing a comprehensive approach to school safety. Mr. Collum will lead a discussion on the Texas Safe Schools Center. Information can be found at <http://txssc.txstate.edu/>.

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

  
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 Dr. Cheryl May

  
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 Date